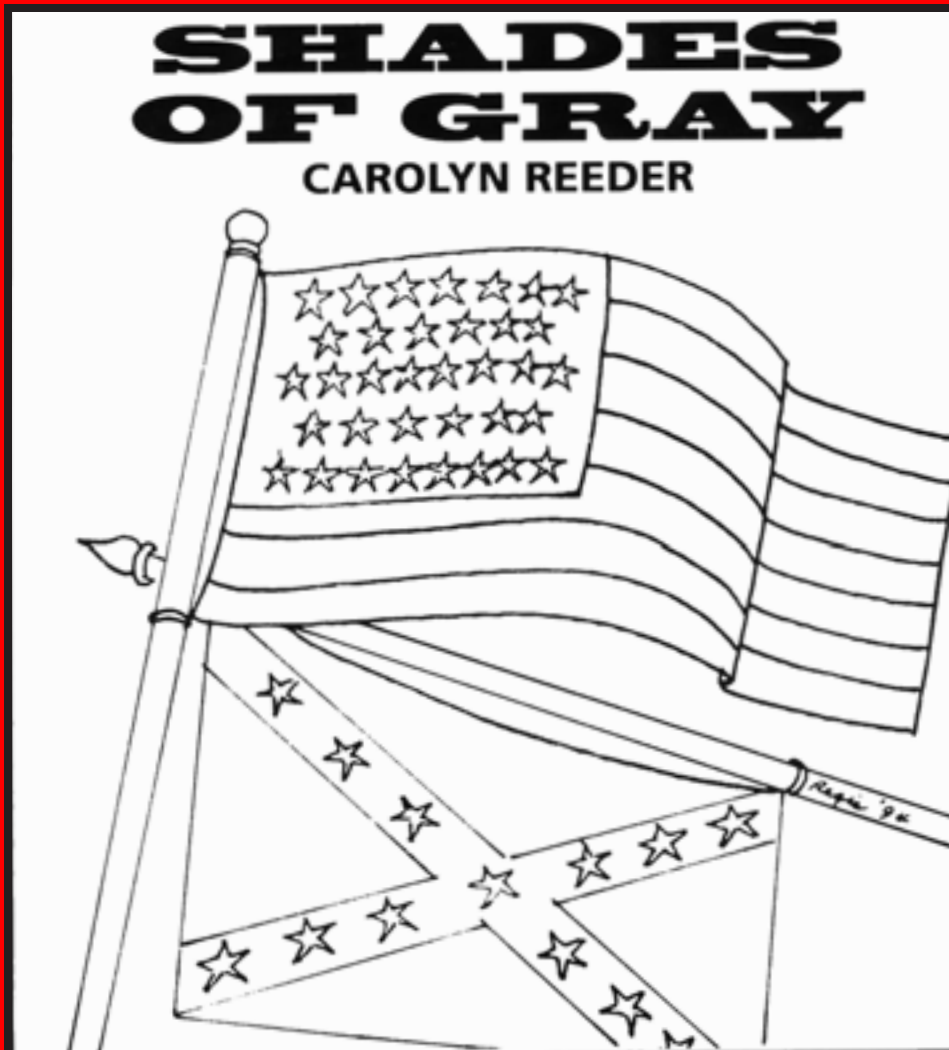


Novel·Ties



A Study Guide

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LEARNING LINKS

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For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide to use in conjunction with the novel *Shades of Gray* consists of lessons for guided reading. Written in chapter-by-chapter format, the guide contains a synopsis, pre-reading activities, vocabulary and comprehension exercises, as well as extension activities to be used as follow-up to the novel.

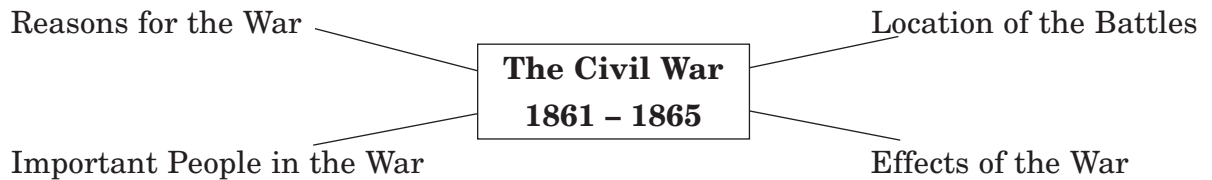
In a homogeneous classroom, whole class instruction with one title is appropriate. In a heterogeneous classroom, reading groups should be formed: each group works on a different novel at its own reading level. Depending upon the length of time devoted to reading in the classroom, each novel, with its guide and accompanying lessons, may be completed in three to six weeks.

Begin using NOVEL-TIES for reading development by distributing the novel and a folder to each child. Distribute duplicated pages of the study guide for students to place in their folders. After examining the cover and glancing through the book, students can participate in several pre-reading activities. Vocabulary questions should be considered prior to reading a chapter; all other work should be done after the chapter has been read. Comprehension questions can be answered orally or in writing. The classroom teacher should determine the amount of work to be assigned, always keeping in mind that readers must be nurtured and that the ultimate goal is encouraging students' love of reading.

The benefits of using NOVEL-TIES are numerous. Students read good literature in the original, rather than in abridged or edited form. The good reading habits, formed by practice in focusing on interpretive comprehension and literary techniques, will be transferred to the books students read independently. Passive readers become active, avid readers.

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. Preview the book by reading the title and author’s name and by looking at the illustration on the cover. What do you think this book will be about? When and where does it take place?
2. Read the Background Information on page two of this study guide. You may also learn more about Reconstruction and the South after the Civil War in an encyclopedia, history book, or on the internet. Make a list of reasons why life in the South was difficult in the years following the Civil War.
3. What movies and TV shows have you seen about the Civil War? Have you read any books about this conflict, often called “The War Between the States”? Work with a partner to fill in a word web, such as the one below. List facts and information about the war in each category.



4. How would you define a coward in wartime? How would you define a traitor? Do you think that anyone who refuses to fight for his or her country in wartime is a coward or a traitor?
5. Will Page, the main character in *Shades of Gray*, comes from a wealthy home with many luxuries. Yet he must live with his uncle and aunt who are poor backwoods farmers with barely enough to eat. Can you predict some conflicts or struggles that Will might face?
6. Use a reference book such as an encyclopedia or social studies text to categorize the following terms on a chart, such as the one below.

Yankees	Rebels	Union
Confederates	boys in blue	boys in gray
Sheridan’s army	Stonewall Jackson	Johnny Reb

North	South

7. Trace a map of the state of Virginia and mark the location of Winchester in the northernmost tip of the state. Also, label the Shenandoah River and Valley and the Piedmont region. Finally, indicate some other locations in Virginia where important Civil War battles were fought. Refer to this map as you read the book.

CHAPTERS 1, 2 (cont.)

Read to find out why Will must go to live with relatives.

Questions:

1. Why did Will express bitterness after the Civil War ended?
2. Why did Will resent going to live with his aunt and uncle, Ella and Jed Jones?
3. How was Will's new home with his relatives different from the home where he grew up?
4. Why was Will surprised when he met his uncle for the first time?
5. Why did Meg and Will disagree about the causes of the Civil War?
6. How had the Civil War caused Uncle Jed and Aunt Ella to suffer?
7. What tasks kept Will busy at his new home? Why were these tasks hard for him?

Questions for Discussion:

1. Do you think Will "will do fine" in his new home? Why do you think he needed to prove to his aunt and uncle that he was not useless?
2. Do you think that people have the right to decide for themselves whether or not they will fight in their country's wars?
3. Do you think that Will's father was justified in preventing his wife from corresponding with her sister?

Literary Element: Mood

The mood of a piece of literature is the general feeling or atmosphere it expresses. In the opening chapters of *Shades of Gray*, the author establishes a mood of bleakness and emptiness that the ruined South experienced just after the Civil War. Find the passage from Chapter One where the farm is described and Aunt Ella is introduced. List the words and phrases that express this somber mood.

Social Studies Connection:

Consult recent newspaper articles and watch television news broadcasts to find out how the issue of states' rights still causes debate in America today.

Writing Activity:

Write about a time when you were critical of a decision made by adults. Explain why you disagreed, tell whether you displayed your disagreement, and if you have changed your mind about the issue.